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Addendum

Rapporteur: Mr. Juichi **Takahara** (Japan)

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (item 4 (b))

Section 19. Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean

1. At its 23rd meeting, on 21 June 1999, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered section 19, Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (A/54/6 (Sect. 19)).

2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the budget section and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration thereof.

Discussion

3. Strong support was expressed for the programme of work under the section. The importance of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean as the only regional institution that takes a systematic approach to the examination of development issues facing Latin America and Caribbean countries was reaffirmed.

4. The view was expressed that paragraph 19.4 gave the impression that the proposed programme of work of the Commission for the biennium 2000–2001 was not based on programme 17 of the medium-term plan for the period 1998–2001, as revised (A/53/6/Rev.1). It was stressed that the programme of work should be elaborated in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme

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Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation.

5. Satisfaction was expressed with the initiatives taken by the Commission in dealing with new and emerging issues in the region. Subprogrammes 5, Social development and social equity, 7, Environmental and land resource sustainability, and 12, Mainstreaming the gender perspective into regional development, were strongly supported.

6. Concern was expressed that resources had not been proposed for the implementation of activities in relation to the Central American subregion that would take into account the critical economic, social and environmental situation facing Central American countries that have recently been affected by natural disasters. It was felt that additional resources should be allocated to assessments of the socio-economic impact of natural disasters on the countries of the region.

7. Satisfaction was expressed that implementation of subprogramme 12 would be met essentially by redeployment of resources within the budget of the Commission. It was stressed that the redeployments should not have a negative impact on the releasing subprogrammes. Information was sought on the impact on the programme of work of the Commission following the incorporation of the Latin American and Caribbean Centre for Demography into the organizational structure of the Commission.

8. It was felt that the formulation of expected accomplishments required improvement, with a view to making them adequate to the objectives of the programme and measurable. The view was also expressed that the programme managers need to implement more fully the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of the Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, which require self-evaluation and identification of activities that are inefficient, ineffective or irrelevant. The view was expressed that the formulation of expected accomplishments was not feasible for some activities dealing with economic and social affairs.

9. The need for the Commission to continue fostering its comparative advantages and differentiated work in relation to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank so as to avoid duplication and overlapping was stressed.

Conclusions and recommendations

10. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of section 19, Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001, with the following modifications:

(a) In paragraph 19.4, the words "three fundamental" should be replaced with the words "programme 17 of the medium-term plan for the period 1998–2001 and the following" and the phrase after the word "circumstances" should be deleted;

(b) The last sentence in paragraph 19.51 should be deleted;

(c) Paragraph 19.71 (a) should read as follows: "Support of the design and implementation of policies to strengthen domestic capacities in the macroeconomic field";

(d) The second sentence of paragraph 19.87 should be deleted.

11. The Committee noted that the implementation of this programme should be in accordance with paragraph 73, section 19, of General Assembly resolution 52/220.

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Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (item 4 (b))

Section 20. Economic and social development in Western Asia

1. At its 23rd meeting, on 21 June 1999, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered section 20, Economic and social development in Western Asia, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (A/54/6 (Sect. 20)).

2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the budget section and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the budget section.

Discussion

3. Support was expressed for the programme of work proposed in this section. It was noted, however, that some activities deserved greater attention.

4. The view was expressed that activities considered obsolete, ineffective or of marginal usefulness should have been identified and proposed for termination by the General Assembly.

5. The view was expressed that the text on expected accomplishments should have been more precise. It was also recognized that the approach to expected accomplishments was at an experimental stage. The view was also expressed that these expected accomplishments, required by the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, needed to be further refined.

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6. It was noted that matters related to human rights were approached from a social and economic perspective. The view was expressed that the formulation of paragraph 20.3 (b) should be in line with the legislative mandate approved in paragraph 18.5 (h) of the medium-term plan for the period 1998–2001.

7. With respect to financial resources, it was felt that programme activities should receive a greater share in the distribution of resources within the section and that programme support should be further reduced. Concern was expressed regarding the steep decrease of extrabudgetary resources.

8. It was noted that the vacancy rate should be kept under review and measures should be taken to reduce it.

9. Views were expressed that the use of consultants should be in accordance with General Assembly guidelines and that particular attention should be given to the geographical diversification of the consultants hired by the secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.

Conclusions and recommendations

10. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of section 20, Economic and social development in Western Asia, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 with the following modifications:

(a) The first sentence of paragraph 20.3 (b) should be: "In line with the revised medium-term plan, gender and issues pertaining to the right to development are mainstreamed in the proposed programme of work for the biennium 2000–2001".

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Rapporteur: Mr. Juichi **Takahara** (Japan)

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (item 4 (b))

Section 21. Regular programme of technical cooperation

1. At its 24th meeting, on 21 June 1999, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered section 21, Regular programme of technical cooperation, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (A/54/6 (Sect. 21) and Corr.1).

2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the budget section and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the budget section.

Discussion

3. Support was expressed for the proposals under this section. It was emphasized that the section played an important role in providing assistance to developing countries, especially least developed countries, and to the countries with economies in transition with respect to integrating themselves into a market economy. The activities on trade and development, human rights, regional and subregional advisory services, sustainable development, social development and poverty alleviation were welcomed.

4. While it was recognized that the activities under this section were by their nature difficult to describe precisely, concern was expressed about the difficulty in assessing whether there existed duplication and/or overlap between the activities carried out under this section and similar activities carried out under other relevant sections of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001.

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5. The absence of a table providing information on the types and estimates of expenditures was noted with concern. The view was expressed that this section should contain an indication of expected accomplishments.

6. The view was expressed that the resources under this section should rather be included under other relevant sections of the programme budget. It was considered that such a procedure would provide greater clarity in the use of these resources and would prevent possible duplication and/or overlap.

7. It was also emphasized that guidelines should be developed to ensure the monitoring and evaluation of the activities carried out under the section and an improved control of the related resources. The view was expressed that the programme managers needed to implement more fully the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation which require self-evaluation and identification of programmed activities that are inefficient, ineffective and irrelevant.

Conclusions and recommendations

8. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of section 21, Regular programme of technical cooperation, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001.**

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Rapporteur: Mr. Juichi **Takahara** (Japan)

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (item 4 (b))

Section 22. Human rights

1. At its 35th meeting, on 24 June 1999, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered section 22, Human rights, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (A/54/6 (Sect. 22)).

2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the budget section and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the budget section.

Discussion

3. Support was expressed for the programme of work proposed in this section and it was emphasized that the promotion of human rights was one of the priorities of the United Nations in the medium-term plan for the period 1998–2001. The view was expressed that the programme of activities proposed in this section correctly reflected the objectives of programme 19 of the medium-term plan for the period 1998–2001. The increase of resources for subprogrammes 1 and 2 was welcomed, but concern was expressed that the decrease of resources under subprogramme 3 could negatively affect the implementation of the proposed activities.

4. The view was expressed that the proposed resource increase for the section as a whole was too small, *inter alia*, as regards the right to development and the effective functioning of the human rights instruments, and that the proposed resources would not be sufficient

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to implement all mandated activities. Concern, however, was expressed about the increase of resources for travel and consultancy.

5. Concern was expressed that the resources proposed for activities related to development are not commensurate with the needs and requirements for full implementation of all mandates in this area.

6. The view was expressed that the programme of work was well-balanced. Support was expressed for the proposed increase of resources for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in New York. Concern was expressed that the strengthening of the Office in New York was diverting resources from substantive activities.

7. The view was expressed that increased coordination and cooperation for the promotion and protection of human rights should be further encouraged among all United Nations organs, bodies and specialized agencies.

8. Concern was expressed that the narrative of the section was not, in some instances, in line with the text of the medium-term plan and that some non-mandated activities had been included.

9. Concern was expressed that not all human rights mandates had been equally treated. In this context, it was stressed that, in view of the historical neglect of the right to development, there is a need to give a special attention to the full implementation of all activities related to the right to development.

10. Concern was also expressed that, once again, no detailed information on the distribution of resources among subprogrammes has been provided, despite observations made in this regard on previous budgetary proposals, to facilitate the review of the budget proposals by the General Assembly. In this context, regret was expressed that, because of this lack of information on the distribution of resources, it was not possible to review in detail resources allocated to the right to development under subprogramme 1 and to technical cooperation under subprogramme 3, both of particular importance in the context of the programme. The fact that the biggest increase of resources is foreseen for subprogramme 1, Right to development, research and analysis, was welcomed.

11. Concern was expressed that economic, social and cultural rights were not sufficiently and appropriately addressed.

12. It was noted with concern that the resources proposed for activities related to development are not commensurate with the needs and requirements for full implementation of all mandates in that area.

13. Concern was expressed that answers to questions raised during the debate were not comprehensive, clear and sufficient in all cases and did not facilitate deliberations on this matter. Appreciation was expressed to the representative of the Secretary-General for the exhaustive information provided.

14. The view was expressed that resources for activities related to future mandates of the Economic and Social Council cannot be included in the proposed programme budget since this is in contravention of General Assembly resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986. In this regard, General Assembly resolution 52/220 of 22 December 1997, in particular paragraph 79, and also resolution 44/201 B of 21 December 1989 were recalled.

15. It was noted with concern that some activities had been included without any legislative mandate by the General Assembly. In this context, the inclusion of the elaboration of development indicators was also noted with concern.

16. Concern was expressed over the significant increase of resources for the human rights programme, including the proposed establishment of seven new Professional posts, the highest staffing proposal compared to other sections of the programme budget.

17. The view was expressed that too much emphasis had been placed on human rights at the international level, but that the synergy of human rights at the international and national levels was not sufficiently highlighted. Concern was expressed that the civil and political rights were not adequately addressed. The view was expressed that more detailed information regarding special procedures of the Commission on Human Rights, especially the number of special rapporteurs, independent experts and working groups, should be included in the budget document. The view was also expressed that these activities should be adequately funded in the budget.

18. The view was expressed that the activities regarding the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance should be more emphasized and that reference should also be made to the regional preparatory meetings.

19. The view was expressed that the integration of human rights components in the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks might lead to objective and/or biased actions, which would deprive developing countries of the right to development in a different form.

20. Concern was expressed about the inclusion in the narrative on expected accomplishments of subprogramme 2 of an increase in the number of States parties to the human rights treaties and in the number of ratifications. The view was expressed that the decision on ratification as well as on rationalization and adaptation of the human rights machinery at the national level was the prerogative of individual sovereign countries rather than an initiative taken by the departments concerned.

21. The view was expressed that resources had been included in the proposal for activities not yet mandated. It was suggested that they would alternatively be better financed under the contingency fund after mandates had been confirmed by the Economic and Social Council.

22. The view was expressed that the explanations regarding the non-inclusion of resources for the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families should be couched in a more positive way. This would avoid giving the impression that a judgement had already been made that the Convention would not enter into force in the biennium 2000–2001. The view was also expressed that more details on the activities of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of migrants should be included in the narrative. It was also suggested that the programme should be revised to reflect the discussions taken by the fifty-fifth session of the Commission on Human Rights.

23. Concern was expressed about the necessity to provide translation services to the special thematic rapporteurs so that they can consider the information given to them by Governments in different languages and ensure the incorporation of such information in their reports.

24. Concern was expressed that neither the Human Rights Centre in Africa nor the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights were mentioned in the narrative.

25. The authenticity of allegations and sources for the allegations received by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights was questioned.

26. The view was expressed that the inclusion in the section of activities related to human rights indicators (para. 22.49 (b) (iii)) and the preparation of new standards (para. 22.47) was not mandated by intergovernmental organs.

27. The view was expressed that the reference to "Paris-principles institutions" in paragraph 22.75 and to "integration of human rights components in the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks" in paragraph 22.79 (c) (i), should be deleted. The view was expressed that paragraph 22.49 (b) (iii) should also be deleted.

28. Concern was expressed that there was no strategy elaborated for the implementation of the right to development and that no research and analytical studies on economic rights and on poverty and human rights had been carried out under any of the subprogrammes. Appreciation of the clear strategy of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights regarding the right to development was expressed.

Conclusions and recommendations

29. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of section 22, Human rights, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 with the following modifications:

(a) In the first sentence of paragraph 22.1, after the words "realization of", the word "all" should be added;

(b) In the second sentence of paragraph 22.1, after the words "the programme is based on", the phrase "the revised medium-term plan for the period 1998–2001 (A/53/6/Rev.1)" should be added;

(c) Paragraph 22.5 should be deleted;

(d) Paragraph 22.26 should be replaced with the following sentence: "Resource requirements for the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families in 2000–2001 will be submitted when the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families enters into force";

(e) In the first sentence of paragraph 22.45, the words "The activities will focus on" should be replaced by "The primary objectives of this subprogramme will include promotion and protection of the right to development. In this regard the activities will be";

(f) In the first sentence of paragraph 22.48, the word "implementation" should be replaced with the words "promotion and protection of";

(g) In the last line of paragraph 22.49 (c) (i), after "ICRC", the words ", OIC, OAU and OAS" should be inserted.

30. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly carefully consider the narrative of paragraph 22.49 (b) (iii), bearing in mind the ongoing consideration of the issues contained in that paragraph.

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Rapporteur: Mr. Juichi **Takahara** (Japan)

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (item 4 (b))

Section 23. Protection of and assistance to refugees

1. At its 30th meeting, on 23 June 1999, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered section 23, Protection of and assistance to refugees, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (A/54/6 (Sect. 23)).

2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the budget section and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the document.

Discussion

3. Support was expressed for the programme of work under this section.

4. Particular emphasis was placed on the importance of providing assistance to women and children refugees. The view was expressed that countries receiving refugees should receive adequate assistance.

5. Concern was expressed regarding the reduced level of extrabudgetary resources projected to be available during the biennium 2000–2001 and the negative impact that such reduction would have on the assistance to refugees, in particular new refugees in Kosovo. The view was expressed that there should be no discriminatory treatment of refugees in the world.

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6. The view was expressed that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) should continue to pay particular attention to the situation of refugees in Africa.

7. The view was expressed that the change by UNHCR to a unified budget for its voluntarily funded programmes, with its emphasis on performance-based principles, was welcome.

8. The view was expressed that more precise language with definitive indicators was necessary so that a meaningful assessment of UNHCR performance could be made at the end of the biennium.

Conclusions and recommendations

9. The Committee recommended that on the basis of the principle of international burden-sharing and solidarity, the level of humanitarian assistance to host countries for the care and maintenance of refugees should be proportionate with the number of refugees they are hosting. In this regard, due attention shall be given to the prolonged presence of refugees, in particular in the developing countries.

10. The Committee stressed that the most durable solution to refugee problems is voluntary and safe repatriation to their countries of origin.

11. The Committee recommended that the Secretary-General revise the programme narrative of section 23, Protection of and assistance to refugees, to take fully into account General Assembly resolution 52/220 of 22 December 1997 (sect. III, para. 82).

12. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of section 23, Protection of and assistance to refugees, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001.

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Rapporteur: Mr. Juichi **Takahara** (Japan)

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (item 4 (b))

Section 24. Palestine refugees

1. At its 29th meeting, on 23 June 1999, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered section 24, Palestine refugees, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (A/54/6 (Sect. 24)).

2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the budget section and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration thereof.

Discussion

3. Support was expressed for the programme of work under the section.

4. The need for the international community to continue to provide assistance to the Palestine refugees through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) was emphasized.

5. UNRWA's role in empowering women under its small-scale enterprise programme was commended and concern was expressed about the reduction in university scholarships awarded to refugee students owing to reduced contributions.

6. It was stressed that the realization of a just, comprehensive and long-lasting solution to the problem of Palestine refugees is of paramount importance for the alleviation of the plight of the Palestine refugees.

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7. Concern was expressed that the level of resources from the regular budget would remain unchanged during the next biennium. It was noted that the proposed increase in voluntary contributions was somewhat optimistic in view of the difficulties for UNRWA to mobilize such resources.

8. Appreciation for the support given by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) in providing educational and health services to the Palestine refugees was expressed.

9. The view was expressed that the expected accomplishments included in this section were too vague and general to enable any credible assessment of the programme performance at the end of the biennium. The view was also expressed that the formulation of expected accomplishments in some activities is not feasible.

Conclusions and recommendations

10. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of section 24, Palestine refugees, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001.

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Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (item 4 (b))

Section 25. Humanitarian assistance

1. At its 29th meeting, on 23 June 1999, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered section 25, Humanitarian assistance, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (A/54/6 (Sect. 25)).

2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the budget section and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration thereof.

Discussion

3. Support was given to the activities undertaken by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The Committee noted the importance of the programme of work and recalled the high priority given to humanitarian assistance in the medium-term plan for the period 1998–2001.

4. It was also noted that the proposed programme budget reflected adjustments made in the structure of the Office with a view to enhancing the role of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and relocating some functions to the United Nations Office at Geneva. It was noted that the advantages of the Office at Geneva were its time-zone and proximity to the operational agencies and to the regions where the activities in the field of humanitarian assistance are being carried out.

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5. Concern was expressed about the balance between regular budget and extrabudgetary resources and about the use of extrabudgetary resources to finance core activities, which should be funded from the regular budget.

6. It was also noted that the results of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction will be reported to the Economic and Social Council in July 1999, as the decade will end this year. Subject to the decisions of the General Assembly, activities carried out under subprogramme 3, natural disaster reduction, will continue during the biennium 2000–2001.

7. Views were expressed on the importance of early warning of natural disasters and humanitarian emergencies, as well as the need for timely response to disasters and emergencies that have humanitarian consequences. Support was expressed for strengthening early warning mechanisms.

8. The view was expressed that the programme of work seemed to be somewhat ambitious for the level of budgetary resources proposed for the year 2000–2001. Efforts should be made therefore, for better coordination of activities with other United Nations players. In this connection, it was also noted that the Inter-Agency Standing Committee database on humanitarian policy initiatives was set up to avoid duplication of policy and functions among the United Nations agencies.

9. The view was also expressed that the existence of extrabudgetary posts may not be automatically recognized as a justification for the establishment of new posts funded by regular budgetary funds.

10. With respect to the narratives of expected accomplishments under the programme of work, the view was expressed that efforts should be made to define measures for the expected accomplishments in order to facilitate objective assessment.

Conclusions and recommendations

11. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of section 25, Humanitarian assistance, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001, subject to the following modifications:

(a) In the sixth line of paragraph 25.6, the words "notably the Security Council" should be deleted;

(b) Paragraph 25.34 (a) (iii) should be renumbered and placed under subparagraph 25.34 (c).

12. The Committee noted that the provision of a grant from the regular budget of the United Nations to the United Nations Development Programme, as recommended in the report of the Secretary-General on methods of financing activities for natural disaster mitigation, prevention and preparedness beyond the biennium 1998–1999 (A/53/641), in connection with the divested activities for disaster mitigation has not yet been adopted by the General Assembly.

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Rapporteur: Mr. Juichi TAKAHARA (Japan)

PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 2000-2001 (ITEM 4 (b))

Section 26. Public information

1. At its 31st meeting, on 23 June 1999, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered section 26, Public information, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (A/54/6 (sect. 26)).

2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the budget section and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the budget section.

Discussion

3. Importance was attached to the public information activities of the Organization. It was emphasized that public information activities were an integral part of the strategic management of the Organization and the dissemination of information on the work of the United Nations throughout the world was considered extremely important. It was underscored that a well-coordinated information strategy was required in order to achieve a wider and effective outreach.

4. The view was expressed that the programme narrative could be better harmonized with the text of the medium-term plan. Views were also expressed that the important role played by the United Nations information centres should have been better reflected in the description of the programme of work.

5. While the inclusion of the expected accomplishments and the efforts being made in that respect were welcomed, views were expressed that they were broad and vague and required refinement and clarity. Views were also expressed that expected accomplishments should be formulated in such a manner that their fulfilment would be measurable. The view was also expressed that tne formulation of expected accomplishments might not be feasible for some of the activities implemented by the Department. The importance of clearly identifying end-users was stressed. The view was also expressed that self-evaluation was an important tool and that such evaluations should be carried out in accordance with the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, which require self-evaluation and identification of activities which are inefficient, ineffective or irrelevant.

6. The Committee noted with concern the modest increase in the level of resources, bearing in mind the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on evaluation (E/AC.51/1999/4) on the inability of the Department of Public Information to implement all mandated activities because of the lack of resources. It was also noted that the resources under the section might not be enough to fully implement the programme during the biennium.

6 (bis). Concern was also expressed on the decrease in resources for the United Nations information centres.

7. Emphasis was given to the importance of the public information activities in the field and views were expressed in support of the strengthening of the role of the information centres. It was also stressed that the integration exercise should be undertaken on a case-by-case basis, without affecting the important role of the information centres and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 52/220 of 22 December 1997. In this context, it was noted with concern that some mandates and activities of the information centres had not been implemented. The view was expressed that the integration of information centres with regional offices of other United Nations programmes should be further promoted.

7 (bis). It was noted with concern that resources allocated for information activities related to special conferences under paragraph 26.140 did not include the Fourth United Nations Conference to Review All Aspects of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices. The view was expressed that resources for that activity should be allocated under this section.

7 (ter). Concern was also expressed that the new structure indicated for the Department was not clearly justified in relation to specific mandates.

8. The success of the United Nations Web site was noted. While the increased use of advanced electronic communication, including the Internet, was welcomed and supported, views were expressed that, given the level of technological development in developing countries, emphasis should continue to be given to the traditional forms of mass media, including radio, television and print media, in order to reach a wider audience in the developing countries. It was noted that, despite the fast development of electronic communication technology, this form

of communication was not accessible to a major portion of the world population, particularly in developing countries.

9. Concern was expressed that some of the promotional material and publications were produced only in a few official languages and views were expressed that such publications should be produced in the six official languages and widely disseminated. The view was expressed that the number of languages of radio programmes should be expanded. Concern was also expressed about the discontinuation of some useful publications, such as Everyone's United Nations, and about the delay in bringing the UN Yearbook up to date.

10. Support was expressed for closer cooperation between the Department of Public Information and the general public, as well as with the media.

10 (bis). Concern was expressed concerning the effectiveness of producing near verbatim summaries of meetings as press releases.

10 (ter). The view was expressed that the activities carried out by the Office of External Relations under section 1 might duplicate or overlap the activities and functions already carried out by the Department of Public Information.

10 (quater). The view was expressed that references to the conclusions and recommendations in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit, as outlined in table 26.28, should be deleted.

Conclusions and recommendations

11. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of section 26, Public information, subject to the modification in paragraph 26.4 where the words "all Member States" should be replaced by "the peoples of the world".

12. In line with the designation of the year 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, by General Assembly resolution 53/22 of 4 November 1998, the Committee welcomed the efforts of the Department of Public Information to strengthen its capacity to disseminate information on and to draw international attention to the dialogue among civilizations with a view to promoting mutual understanding, tolerance, peaceful coexistence and international cooperation.

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Addendum

Rapporteur: Mr. Juichi **Takahara** (Japan)

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (item 4 (b))

Section 27. Administrative services

1. At its 32nd meeting, on 24 June 1999, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered section 27, Administrative services, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (A/54/6 (Sect. 27)). It had before it the proposed programme budget in respect of subsections 27A, Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management; 27B, Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts; 27C, Office of Human Resources Management; 27D, Office of Central Support Services; 27E, Administration, Geneva; 27F, Administration, Vienna; and 27G, Administration, Nairobi.

2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the budget section and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the document, indicating that the Department of Management would continue the implementation of the Secretary-General's reform of the management of the United Nations. Furthermore, he indicated that the focus of the work for the next biennium would be on strengthening of management, periodic financial reporting and performance monitoring functions. High priority would be given to the effective and coherent exercise of management functions, the establishment and maintenance of clear lines of responsibility and accountability and enhancement of the responsiveness of the Secretariat to the changing and growing needs of the Organization.

3. The attention of the Committee was drawn to the diversity of work of the Department of Management, activities of which included the management of financial resources, human resources and support operations. Those services provided the backbone for the efficient

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and effective functioning of the work of the Organization, and efficient administrative services paved the way for the useful and timely delivery of outputs and services to Member States. It was indicated that efficiency measures would continue to be undertaken to streamline functions, simplify processes and procedures and modernize services, especially through expanded use of information technology. Furthermore, the Secretariat would continue the progressive investment in training of staff and development of substantive skills, as well as its efforts to provide for a secure and safe working environment.

Discussion

4. Support was expressed for the proposed programme of work of the Department of Management and the level and allocation of resources proposed for the biennium 2000–2001 under section 27. The view was expressed that the Department of Management was playing an important role in the implementation of resolutions 52/12 A and B of 12 November and 19 December 1997 and 52/220 of 22 December 1997, streamlining the organizational structure of the Secretariat, strengthening the accountability of programme managers and staff and increasing the efficiency of the Secretariat. Support was also expressed for the efforts by the Department to identify efficiency savings to be reallocated for economic and social development through the Development Account. Appreciation was expressed to the secretariats of the Committee and the Fifth Committee and the staff of the Department of Management for their services and the assistance provided to both Committees.

5. The view was expressed that the format of section 27 of the proposed programme budget should be harmonized with that of other budget sections.

6. With regard to section 27A, Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management, the view was expressed that the programme narrative should have spelt out more clearly the measures taken to implement resolution 53/207 of 18 December 1998, in particular with respect to the responsibilities of the secretariat of the Committee for Programme and Coordination for the timely submission of documentation. The view was expressed that the General Assembly should consider, at its fifty-fourth session, the issue of all additional human and other resources required to strengthen the secretariat of the Committee, taking into account its increasing workload and responsibilities, in accordance with paragraphs 356 and 369 of part one of its report.[1]

7. The view was expressed that there was a lack of justification and evidence regarding the increase in the workload and responsibilities of the secretariat of the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

8. With regard to section 27C, Office of Human Resources Management, support was expressed for the proposed programme of work and level of resources, in particular under training programmes. However, it was indicated that training should be job-related, and, in this regard, it was suggested to replace the notion of continuous learning with upgrading of job-related skills. The importance of comprehensive evaluation of all training programmes, as had been recommended by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, was stressed. Efforts made to ensure that consultants and experts did not replace staff members were noted. It was stressed that the Office of Human Resources Management should be more active in recruitment of staff from unrepresented and under-represented countries and in resolving geographical and gender imbalances in the Secretariat, in particular with regard to high-level posts. It was stressed that emphasis should be placed on staff mobility, as well as security and safety of staff in the field. With regard to the reform of the Office of Human Resources Management, the view was expressed that delegation of authority should be accompanied by a system of control and accountability. The view was expressed that section 27C still needed more improvement from the point of view of

concise and focused descriptions of activities and objectives to be implemented. It was stated with concern that the introduction to section 27C did not fully reflect the relevant programme of the medium-term plan. Concern was expressed about the appropriateness of reference in the programme narrative to the activities of a Task Force for Human Resources Management Reform, as it had no General Assembly mandate, although the view was also expressed that this was within the purview of the Secretary-General. Concern was also expressed regarding the provision of paragraph 22 of section V of Assembly resolution 53/221 of 7 April 1999. The view was expressed that General Service staff of all nationalities must be given equal opportunities to be promoted to the Professional category through the G-to-P examinations, and that the Assembly should keep this issue under review.

9. With regard to section 27D, Office of Common Support Services, the view was expressed that more concerted efforts should be pursued to expand further the common services arrangements with the United Nations funds and programmes and with the other organizations of the United Nations system, including such services in other United Nations locations. The view was expressed that the process of technological transformation of the Organization should be constantly coordinated in all locations, as well as with Member States, in order to avoid possible disruption of the intergovernmental processes owing to rapidly changing working methods and procedures resulting from technological innovations.

10. With regard to section 27G, Administration, Nairobi, while the proposals for reorganization and strengthening of that duty station in response to resolution 52/220 were commended, the view was expressed that full coordination of such efforts with the governing bodies of the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) was advisable to avoid any negative impact on programme implementation. The view was expressed that the United Nations Office at Nairobi should be treated on a par with other United Nations offices, such as those at Geneva and Vienna, and should be provided with full conference services.

11. The view was also expressed that the current level of General Service staff should be reviewed in view of various measures taken to reduce the workload.

12. With regard to the inclusion in the proposed programme budget of recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, concern was expressed that those recommendations had not yet been reviewed by the General Assembly. The view was also expressed that the inclusion of those recommendations was in full compliance with decisions of the Assembly.

13. The view was expressed that the Committee for Programme and Coordination should limit the time given to the consideration of this section as it was not a substantive programme.

Conclusions and recommendations

14. The Committee emphasized that the responsibilities and workload of the secretariat of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, which also serves as the secretariat of the Fifth Committee, should have been clearly spelled out in the programme narrative, in accordance with paragraphs 356 and 369 of part one of its report.[1]

15. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly continue consideration of this issue in its fifty-fourth session, in accordance with paragraphs 8 and 9 of section III of its resolution 52/220.

16. The Committee recommended to the General Assembly that it request the Secretary-General to reformulate the narrative of section 27C in accordance with its resolution 53/221. The revised narrative should be submitted to the Assembly for consideration at its fifty-fourth session.

17. The Committee recommended that future programme narratives proposed under section 27 should better reflect the accomplishments to be achieved, in accordance with the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation.

18. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly approval of the programme narrative of sections 27A, B, D, E, F and G, Administrative services, subject to the following modification in paragraph 27A.27 (d) (iii): reference should be included to the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session* (A/53/16).

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Addendum

Rapporteur: Mr. Juichi **Takahara** (Japan)

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (item 4 (b))

Section 28. Internal oversight

1. At its 33rd meeting, on 24 June 1999, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered section 28, Internal oversight, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (A/54/6 (Sect. 28)).

2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the budget section and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the document.

Discussion

3. Support was expressed for the programme of work and functions of the Office. Satisfaction was expressed for the contribution of the Office's work to the reform efforts of the Secretary-General and improvements for the efficient and effective use of resources in the United Nations. Doubts were expressed about the real contribution of the Office to the improvement of the efficient and effective use of resources in the United Nations. The view was also expressed that attention should be paid to the structure of the Office to avoid its becoming too complex and weighty.

4. The objectives and outputs were noted, and the inclusion of expected accomplishments in the proposed programme budget was welcomed. However, concern was expressed regarding the connection between the activities described and how progress towards attainment of the expected accomplishments would be measured.

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5. The view was expressed that an increase in the level of resources was needed. The view was also expressed that the Office should set an example by demonstrating how savings can be effectively achieved. Clarification was sought on whether the level of resources would allow the Office to now reach its "cruising speed". Further, concern was expressed at the increase in the level of resources for consultants and travel. The view was also expressed that the Office should not rely heavily on external consultants and experts to perform internal oversight functions and that these resources should be managed in a more economical manner. Concern was also expressed regarding the increase in the level of resources for the section, taking into account the fact that internal oversight is not a priority in the medium-term plan.

6. Concern was expressed at the distribution of resources among the four subprogrammes and the need to balance these resources vis-à-vis the programme of work. The view was expressed that there was a need to avoid duplication among the four subprogrammes. It was noted that priority was being given to the audit and management consulting programme, and that audit activities were core functions of the Office. The introduction of audit cycles of three to four years, in accordance with internal audit standards, was welcomed, and support was expressed for the horizontal and thematic approach, which would lead to greater cohesion among the United Nations offices.

7. The question of the qualifications of the Office's personnel was raised, and the view was expressed that auditors recruited should possess the necessary skills to appropriately perform the functions.

8. The initiative of the Office to coordinate and cooperate with external oversight bodies, as well as with the funds and programmes of the United Nations, was welcomed. However, the view was expressed with regret that this was not adequately reflected in the programme of work.

9. Appreciation was expressed for the activities of the Central Evaluation Unit and for the further refining of the work of the Central Monitoring and Inspection Unit. The view was expressed that these two subprogrammes were beneficial to both the United Nations and Member States. However, it was noted that the units should not just provide guidelines for programme managers, but should also play a greater and more active role in the self-evaluation and monitoring processes of the Organization's departments. In addition, the issue of the timing of evaluation reports provided by the Central Evaluation Unit was raised, and clarification was sought as to whether it was coherent or was determined on the basis of the resources available to the Unit.

10. With regard to the Investigations Section, the view was expressed that it was difficult to measure in advance the workload of the Section. However, a question was raised regarding the effectiveness of the Section in serving as a deterrent, as the number of cases had continued to increase over the past four and one half years. The view was expressed that the deterrent role of internal oversight should have led to a decrease in the number of cases. The view was also expressed that the Investigations Section should not only be reactive but should also be proactive in addressing misuse of United Nations resources.

11. Appreciation was expressed to the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight for the work accomplished by his Office under his leadership.

Conclusions and recommendations

12. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of section 28, Internal oversight, subject to the following modifications:

(a) Paragraph 28.3 should be replaced with:

"28.3 In its programme of work for the biennium 2000–2001, OIOS will manage the responsibilities of each oversight unit within the Office to ensure coherence and in order to assist the Secretary-General in fulfilling his internal oversight responsibilities in respect of resources and staff of the Organization through the exercise of the functions enumerated in resolution 48/218 B."

(b) Paragraph 28.20 should be replaced with:

"28.20 The objectives of the subprogramme are:

"(a) To facilitate the assessment by intergovernmental bodies, as systematically as possible, of the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the activities of programmes in relation to their objectives;

"(b) To enable the Secretariat and Member States to engage in systematic reflection with a view to increasing the effectiveness of the main programmes of the Organization by altering their content and, if necessary, reviewing their objectives;

"(c) To assist the departments and offices in the Secretariat in implementing approved evaluation recommendations;

"(d) To support the evaluation activities of departments and offices.";

(c) Paragraph 28.24 should be replaced with:

"28.4 The expected accomplishments by the end of the biennium consist of increases in the implementation of approved recommendations contained in evaluation reports and strengthening the role of self-evaluation within the Organizations.";

(d) The two first sentences of paragraph 28.41 should be replaced with:

"In its programme of work for the biennium 2000–2001, the Division plans to consolidate its resources to provide comprehensive internal audit coverage. The Division will deliver the following outputs during the biennium:".

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Addendum

Rapporteur: Mr. Juichi **Takahara** (Japan)

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (item 4 (b))

Section 29. Jointly financed administrative activities

1. At its 36th meeting, on 25 June 1999, the Committee considered section 29, Jointly financed administrative activities, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (A/54/6 (Sect. 29)).

2. The budget section was introduced by the representative of the Secretary-General, who responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the budget section.

Discussion

3. The programme narrative proposed under section 29 was noted. The view was expressed that this budget section, like others, should have included information on expected accomplishments to be achieved in the course of the programme implementation.

4. The view was expressed that the methodology applied for the presentation of activities proposed under section 29 was at variance with the approach taken with respect to other budget sections and that the approach should be unified. The view was also expressed that the activities proposed under this budget section had a limited programmatic content, owing to a shared responsibility of the United Nations for the funding of the proposed activities.

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Conclusions and recommendations

5. The Committee took note of the narrative of section 29, Jointly financed administrative activities, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001.

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Rapporteur: Mr. Juichi **Takahara** (Japan)

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (item 4 (b))

Section 31. Construction, alteration, improvement and major maintenance

1. At its 36th meeting, on 25 June 1999, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered section 31, Construction, alteration, improvement and major maintenance, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (A/54/6 (Sect. 31)).

2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the budget section and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the document.

Discussion

3. An expression of support was made for the programme of work proposed for the biennium 2000–2001 under section 31. The view was expressed that periodic evaluation of the physical conditions of the United Nations facilities and their timely maintenance and renovation was essential in order to provide for the normal working conditions of delegations and staff. Concern was expressed that delay in the renovation and repair of deteriorating facilities, structures and systems, and a reduction in the level of resources experienced in the past under this budget section, had substantial implications for the Organization and appeared to be wasteful in the long run. The view was expressed that the programme narrative should have indicated, with respect to individual projects proposed under the programme, possible implications for the Organization in cases where implementation of those projects could be delayed owing to insufficient funding or reduction of resources.

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4. The need for a long-term programme for capital improvements and upgrading of the facilities was emphasized. In this context, the view was expressed that the capital master plan, along with proposals for its implementation, should be submitted by the Secretariat to the General Assembly for its review.

5. The view was expressed that priority should be given to the multi-year abatement programme for asbestos-containing materials during the biennium 2000–2001.

6. The view was expressed that the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions were the proper organs for review of the proposed programme budget under this budget section.

Conclusions and recommendations

7. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative proposed under section 31, Construction, alteration, improvement and major maintenance, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001.

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Addendum

Rapporteur: Mr. Juichi **Takahara** (Japan)

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (item 4 (b))

Section 33. Development account

1. At its 36th meeting, on 25 June 1999, the Committee considered section 33, Development account, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (A/54/6 (Sect. 33)).

2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the budget section and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the budget section.

Discussion

3. It was noted that the General Assembly had yet to approve modalities for the operation of the development account. It was noted with regret that the budget section did not contain a detailed programme of work for the biennium 2000–2001, as required by the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation. However, the view was also expressed that it would not have been appropriate to submit a programme of work before there was agreement on the modalities for operating the development account.

4. The view was expressed that project proposals envisaged for the biennium 1998–1999 should have been submitted for the approval of the Committee in 1998 rather than to the Economic and Social Council. The view was also expressed that proposals identifying future efficiency measures should be submitted to Member States before the General Assembly approved the modalities for the operation of the development account.

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5. The view was expressed that section 33 should be omitted from the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 and that the proposed budget for this section should be submitted separately as soon as the General Assembly had decided on the modalities for the operation of the development account.

Conclusions and recommendations

6. The Committee noted that the programme narrative for the utilization of the amount approved for the development account had not been submitted.

7. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to submit the proposals for the utilization of the development account to the Assembly at its fifty-fourth session.

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Addendum

Rapporteur: Mr. Juichi **Takahara** (Japan)

Programme questions: evaluation (item 4 (c))

In-depth evaluation of the programme on disarmament

1. At its 3rd, 5th and 6th meetings, on 7, 8 and 9 June 1999, the Committee considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of the programme on disarmament transmitted to it under cover of a note by the Secretary-General (E/AC.51/1999/2).

2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the report and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the report.

Discussion

3. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the high quality of the report. As a result of the elaboration of the report and the consultation inherent to the process of internal oversight, the useful interaction prior to the preparation of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 to cope with the findings of the Office of Internal Oversight Services was noted.

4. Representatives considered that the programme was of high priority. The decrease of resources available to it throughout the period under review raised concerns; the financial situation did not reflect the priority given to the programme by the General Assembly. It was noted that the fellowship programme, publications and the regional centres for peace and disarmament, in particular, had been affected by resource constraints. It was observed that funding the activities of the regional centres through voluntary contributions was not a satisfactory arrangement. The view was expressed that the report should have included a recommendation on support for the regional centres.

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5. Information was requested on the impact of the 1997 reorganization, assigning the responsibility of secretariat support to two different departments, the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services and the Department for Disarmament Affairs.

6. On the subject of mandated follow-up actions regarding multilateral disarmament agreements, it was recalled that it was the sovereign right of a State to decide whether it wished to sign and ratify an international agreement, and, in this regard, the United Nations Secretariat could only provide technical advice, if requested by a Member State. In respect of the promotion of ratification by the Secretariat, it was noted that the response of Member States to appeals by the Secretary-General was positive, and the view was expressed that he should take more of such initiatives in favour of disarmament. The view was expressed that verification activities were only a small part of the issue of treaty implementation.

7. The view was expressed that the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) was playing a useful role in carrying out independent research and that the Department for Disarmament Affairs should avoid duplicating its work. The view was expressed that budgetary support to UNIDIR should increase. It was observed that the regular budget appropriations should not be used to fund independent institutes.

8. Representatives who had participated in the fellowship programme confirmed the good performance of the programme as evaluated in the report. The view was expressed that ways should be found to strengthen the fellowship programme.

9. Regarding the participation of non-governmental organizations in the work of the United Nations, it was recalled that the deliberative and negotiating functions of the multilateral disarmament machinery were the prerogative of Governments. In this respect, it was also recalled that the participation of non-governmental organizations was encouraged by Member States and took the form of contributions to data banks and information made available to delegations, as well as exchange of views with government representatives in formal and informal forums.

10. The Committee noted that, since 1992, because of budgetary constraints, the number of publications produced by the disarmament programme had been reduced. The view was expressed that the trend of discontinuing publications was regrettable. The Committee stressed the importance of *The United Nations Disarmament Yearbook* for the work of government representatives.

11. The view was expressed that the decision of the Secretariat to discontinue publications that duplicated those published elsewhere was a positive step, and that, in general, the programme should focus on areas where there was demonstrated need. The need to enhance the dissemination of information was recognized.

12. The view was expressed that the evaluation should have included not only the achievements in the field of disarmament but also the failures and shortcomings.

13. The view was also expressed that reference should have been made in paragraph 8 of the report to:

(a) The decision taken by the Conference on Disarmament on the establishment of an ad hoc committee to negotiate, on the basis of the report of the Special Coordinator (CD/1299) and the mandate contained therein, a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices;

(b) The failure of the Conference on Disarmament to establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament.

14. With regard to section V.D, on an integrated approach to peace and security, the view was expressed that the Secretariat should use those concepts which enjoyed consensus.

15. In the course of the debate, the following observations were made about the recommendations:

(a) *Recommendation 1*. It was stated that the Committee was not the appropriate forum in which to address budgetary issues. The view was expressed that the Committee had the mandate to address any matter related to the budget. The view was also expressed that, in accordance with the mandate of the Office of Internal Oversight Services established in General Assembly resolution 48/218 B, the Office should not make budgetary recommendations. It was noted that the evaluation report had been drafted before the preparation of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001.

(b) *Recommendation 2*. Reservations were made on the added value that the provision of additional information by the Department for Disarmament Affairs in reports submitted to the First Committee would offer.

(c) *Recommendation 3 (b)*. It was stated that paragraph 114 of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly did not provide a mandate for the activity envisaged in this recommendation. It was also observed that the Department for Disarmament Affairs did not have any mandate to facilitate the exchange of experience between treaty implementing bodies.

(d) *Recommendation 4*. It was stated that requests for studies and technical information should follow the appropriate procedures in place.

(e) *Recommendation 6*. The view was expressed that, while the Department for Disarmament Affairs should be given access to the databases of other Secretariat departments, there was no mandate for providing the Department with access to databases being maintained by organizations like IAEA, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. In most cases, there were strict confidentiality rules covering the data available to those organizations. Any such proposal would need to be cleared by the First Committee, the General Assembly and the appropriate organs of other international organizations concerned.

(f) *Recommendation 7 (b)*. It was stated that the Department for Disarmament Affairs did not have any mandate to maintain institutionalized working-level contacts with other organizations involved in disarmament-related programmes. Such a programme would have to obtain approval from the First Committee and the General Assembly, the Conference of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, the General Conference of IAEA, etc. Even after mandates were obtained, the process would need to be under some kind of intergovernmental oversight mechanism.

(g) *Recommendation 8*. It was stated that new measures for the dissemination of information should be well targeted, and should include performance indicators and regular evaluations. The view was expressed that the involvement of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters in the formulation of an information strategy was not required.

Conclusions and recommendations

16. The Committee expressed concern at the late issuance of the report and emphasized that such reports should be submitted in accordance with the six-week rule in future.

17. The Committee reiterated the importance that Member States attach to the programme, which is one of the eight priority areas of work of the Organization identified by the General Assembly in the medium-term plan for the period 1998–2001.

18. The Committee highlighted the importance of the regional centres for peace and disarmament. The Committee requested the Secretary-General to take appropriate action to strengthen the centres and make them more effective, so as to achieve their objectives.

19. The Committee emphasized that the resource proposals should be submitted only through established procedures to the relevant bodies, in accordance with the relevant regulations and rules and resolutions of the General Assembly.

20. The assistance provided to parties to multilateral agreements was noted with appreciation.

21. The Committee noted the importance of the participation of non-governmental organizations in the general debate in the disarmament forums. The Committee recalled that the deliberative and negotiating functions of the multilateral disarmament machinery were the prerogative of Governments.

22. The Committee was pleased with the good performance of the fellowship programme.

23. The Committee endorsed recommendations 4, 5 and 7 (a).

24. The Committee also recommended, in connection with recommendation 3 (a), that in keeping with existing legal provisions regarding the role of the Secretariat, and in collaboration with relevant treaty organizations and regional organizations, the Department for Disarmament Affairs should facilitate the exchange of information between interested States and undertake, at the request of Governments, advisory services and technical assistance relating to the ratification of disarmament treaties.

25. The Committee further recommended, in connection with recommendation 6, that arrangements be worked out between the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the other relevant Secretariat departments to facilitate access by the Department to disarmament-related information contained in their databases.

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Rapporteur: Mr. Juichi **Takahara** (Japan)

Programme questions: evaluation (item 4 (c))

In-depth evaluation of the electoral assistance programme

1. At its 2nd and 3rd meetings, on 7 June 1999, the Committee considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of United Nations electoral assistance, transmitted under cover of a note by the Secretary-General (E/AC.51/1999/3 and Corr.1).

2. The representative of the Secretary-General responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the report.

Discussion

3. The view was expressed that the quality, scope and comprehensiveness of the report were satisfactory. The view was expressed that the report should have focused on the real work of the Organization on electoral assistance, instead of devoting too much time to the work and norms of other intergovernmental organizations on the matter.

4. Concerns and doubts were expressed with regard to the legislative mandate for changing, in the report, the priority of the electoral assistance programme without a clear mandate by the General Assembly. In this regard, it was recalled that, in the medium-term plan, it had been clearly stated that the main objective of this programme was to render electoral assistance to Member States upon request and in accordance with the relevant decisions of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

5. It was observed that there should be a clearer division of responsibilities among agencies of the United Nations system to avoid duplication of effort and overlapping

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responsibilities. It was stated that the role of the Electoral Assistance Division should focus on areas where the Division enjoyed a comparative advantage. The view was expressed that the report did not sufficiently clarify the role played by the Division in providing assistance in the field, in contrast to the role played by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which had been made clearer. The view was also expressed that there was a need to update the role that the Electoral Assistance Division should play in the light of the changing needs of countries.

6. The view was expressed that the Electoral Assistance Division should lead the United Nations electoral assistance activities and regrets were expressed regarding the long interregnum between the departure of the first Director of the Division, who retired in 1995, and the appointment of his successor in 1998. In this context, the role of the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs as the United Nations focal point for electoral assistance activities was reaffirmed.

7. With respect to resources and funding, the view was expressed that electoral assistance activities initiated by the United Nations should be funded through the regular budget. It was noted that the report failed to clarify how some electoral assistance activities were funded and gave the impression that the United Nations was funding them in their entirety. It was also pointed out that more information should be presented about the different types of electoral assistance given, especially when they were innovative.

8. Disappointment was expressed that, of the 68 countries that had received electoral assistance, only two were specifically mentioned as having been successful cases.

9. The scarcity of internal assessments used in the report was noted and it was suggested that, while external assessments could be used as background information, it was not appropriate to include these in the report.

10. In the course of the debate, the following observations and reservations were expressed concerning the recommendations:

Recommendation 1. Doubts were expressed as to whether the reference to post-election assistance was based on an accurate interpretation of the mandates. The role of the United Nations Development Programme was recalled. The view was expressed that the United Nations-United Nations Development Programme guidelines referred to in the report had not been approved by the General Assembly. The view was also expressed that there was no mandate defining specific functions of the Electoral Assistance Division when providing post-election assistance and that the issue was yet to be decided by the General Assembly.

Recommendation 2. Reservations were expressed on recommendation 2, since there were doubts about the mandate behind the proposals. The view was also expressed that implementation of recommendation 2 would restrict the activity of the Electoral Assistance Division.

Recommendation 2 (d). Support was expressed for the coordination and facilitation of lessons learned, but the use of the term "democratization activities" was questioned in reference to established mandates. It was pointed out that the experience of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations with respect to setting up a well-performing Lessons Learned Unit could be used as a model by the Electoral Assistance Division.

Recommendation 2 (f). While support was expressed for the mainstreaming of gender issues, the view was expressed that the matter should have been discussed more substantively in the context of electoral assistance.

Recommendation 2 (g). The view was expressed that extrabudgetary funds would be appropriate to fund certain activities, but that needs assessment missions should be funded

through the regular budget. Concern was expressed that over-reliance on extrabudgetary funding might delay the democratization process in countries which could not attract sufficient voluntary contributions. The view was expressed that, given the importance of the electoral assistance programme, regular budget resources should be increased. The view was expressed that, in accordance with the mandate of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, which was established in resolution 48/218 B of 29 July 1994, the Office should not make budgetary recommendations.

Recommendation 3. Support was expressed for a broad agreement among the various offices and programmes involved in order to achieve an integrated approach to providing electoral assistance through a more streamlined and coherent division of responsibilities under the leadership of the Electoral Assistance Division. The view was also expressed that recommendation 3, in its present formulation, would lead to micro-management. The view was expressed that the agreement on the allocation of responsibilities within the United Nations should not cover procedures for handling requests by Member States.

Conclusions and recommendations

11. There was agreement in the Committee on the continued importance and relevance of the programme on electoral assistance.

12. In general, strong support was expressed for this subprogramme. It was recognized that the role of the Electoral Assistance Division was of great importance for the Organization, and that it had been successful in the 1990s in providing electoral assistance to countries undergoing their first round of elections.

13. The Committee recommended approval of recommendation 1, on the understanding that its implementation would be in accordance with subprogramme 1.3 of the medium-term plan.

14. The Committee recommended approval of recommendation 2 (a) to (d), (f) and (g), on the understanding that:

(a) With regard to 2 (d), lessons learned from democratization activities would be included only to the extent that those activities enjoyed mandates;

(b) Regarding 2 (g), over-reliance on extrabudgetary funding should be avoided to the extent possible.

15. The Committee recommended approval of recommendation 3, on the understanding that the allocation of respective responsibilities should be in accordance with the relevant provisions of the medium-term plan.

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Addendum

Rapporteur: Mr. Juichi **Takahara** (Japan)

Programme questions: evaluation (4 (c))

Triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-sixth session on the evaluation of the Department of Public Information

1. At its 4th meeting, on 8 June 1999, the Committee considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-sixth session on the evaluation of the Department of Public Information, transmitted under cover of a note by the Secretary-General (E/AC.51/1999/4).

2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the report and responded to questions raised during the Committee's consideration of the report.

Discussion

3. The Committee noted the efforts and progress of the Department of Public Information in implementing a number of recommendations made by the Committee three years previously. The view was expressed, however, that progress on many aspects of the work of the Department on which recommendations had been made was slow. It was noted that, during the past three years, public information activities had gone through a reorientation, and that more time was needed to assess the results of that reorientation.

4. Concern was expressed that the inadequacy of resources was the cause of a number of difficulties faced by the Department in implementing its activities, as identified in the report under consideration. In particular, it was noted that, because of the reduction in resources, many United Nations information centres could not play a meaningful role. The

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view was expressed that the report should have offered suggestions for remedial action in its conclusions and recommendations. Several representatives expressed the view that triennial reviews of the implementation of earlier recommendations of the Committee should adequately reflect new concerns due to new trends and developments that had arisen in the intervening three years.

5. On the overall strategy of the Department, and in respect to the work of its Strategic Communications Planning Group, it was stressed that the information goals and priorities the Department should follow were those enunciated by the General Assembly. The view was expressed that the coordination of the public information activities of the Secretariat needed to be improved, and that the Department should maintain more sustained contacts with other departments.

6. Support was expressed for innovations, such as those of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library. Use made by the Department of the Internet and the opportunities it offered for dissemination of information was welcomed. It was noted, however, that traditional media, such as printed material, should not be neglected as access to new technologies was not yet universal.

7. The efforts of the Department to pursue a more active way of using traditional media were noted. In particular, the continuing quality of *Africa Recovery* was commended. The view was expressed that the publication, with its well-defined target audience, offered a model for other departmental publications. Regarding radio broadcasting, it was noted that the development of a United Nations radio broadcasting capacity would necessitate funding. The representative of the Secretariat informed the Committee that funds were not currently available, in the regular budget or through extrabudgetary resources, and that the Department was approaching Member States for this purpose.

8. The Committee attaches importance to transparency and it expressed the view that ways should be found to facilitate access to United Nations officials by media organizations. In this respect, the Committee noted that the recommended Secretary-General's bulletin on disclosure of information had not yet been issued. It was stressed that the newly issued guidelines on disclosure of information should be specific and clear. Their implementation should not add a new layer of bureaucracy in the Secretariat.

9. It was observed that the timely issuance of information was a key question. It was noted that the development of a more effective news-gathering and delivery system was a positive step. Regret was expressed that existing practices impeding access by the visual media to activities of the United Nations had not been reviewed.

10. On the integration of information centres with the offices of resident coordinators, the risk of imposing an additional burden on resident coordinators and, as a result, compromising the effectiveness of information activities caused concern. Such integration should be done on a case-by-case basis. The view was also expressed that in selecting resident coordinators the additional role should be considered.

11. The Committee noted the efforts by the Publications Board with regard to the adoption of a policy requiring departments to establish mechanisms to enhance the quality of their publications. It was noted that, although quality control was still a concern, the Board had not considered a centralized policy of peer review to be feasible. Action by the Publications Board on a policy to monitor the quality of publications was seen as desirable, bearing in mind that the Board should facilitate the work of departments, and should not make their tasks more complicated, as recommended by the Committee at its thirty-eighth session.

Conclusions and recommendations

12. The Committee commended the report and the monitoring and follow-up activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services that went into its preparation. The Committee was of the view that the report gave an accurate description of the uneven implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee at its thirty-sixth session, and of the difficulties encountered by the Department, and had identified areas where progress was still needed.

13. The Committee stressed the importance it attached to the work of the Department of Public Information and the role it could play in presenting a positive image of the United Nations to the public.

14. The Committee recommended that recommendation 1 be implemented in full conformity with rule 101.2 (p) of the Staff Regulations and Rules.

15. The Committee endorsed recommendation 2, on the understanding that the quality of publications should continue to be improved, and that in this regard recommendation 2 should facilitate rather than control the publications.

16. The author departments must take primary responsibility for their outputs vis-à-vis substance, cost-effectiveness and relevance to mandates and should exercise that responsibility in accordance with the policy to be adopted by the Publications Board and in a way which ensured systematic quality control.

17. The Committee noted the importance of information centres and recommended that all efforts be made to ensure that the centres would play a meaningful communications role.

18. The Committee emphasized that programmes should be evaluated with a view to ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the programmes and legislative mandates of the Organization. Analytical and critical evaluations of the implementation of programmes and legislative mandates should be carried out, examining whether changes therein required review of the methods of delivery, the continuing relevance of administrative procedures and whether the activities corresponded to the mandates as they might be reflected in the approved budgets and the medium-term plan. The recommendations in the evaluation studies should be strictly in accordance with the approved legislative mandates and regulations and rules of the Organization.

19. The Committee recognized the importance of publications in promoting the image of the United Nations and their usefulness for Member States and the public.

20. The Committee noted that the evaluation report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, together with the recommendations of the Committee thereon, had not been submitted to the Committee on Information as had been recommended.

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Rapporteur: Mr. Juichi **Takahara** (Japan)

Programme questions: evaluation (item 4 (c))

Triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-sixth session on the evaluation of peacekeeping operations: termination phase

1. At its 2nd meeting, on 8 June 1999, the Committee considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee on Programme and Coordination at its thirty-sixth session on the evaluation of peacekeeping operations: termination phase, transmitted under cover of a note by the Secretary-General (E/AC.51/1999/5).

Discussion

2. The view was expressed that the report was comprehensive and forthright.

3. Satisfaction was expressed with the progress achieved by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in the management of the termination phase and in implementing most of the recommendations endorsed by the Committee three years previously, particularly those related to the lessons learned process. Further development of that process by the Department was encouraged. Particular concern was expressed at the non-implementation of recommendation 1, on the establishment of an archive of mission-specific standard operating procedures, and the lack of updating of the guideline standard operating procedures. Concern was expressed about the level of resources necessary to create the indexed archive of mission-specific standard operating procedures.

4. It was noted that the responsibility for further disseminating information from lessons learned efforts and ensuring that those lessons were internalized by the personnel who

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participated in future missions lay with the Department. The proposed merger of the Policy Analysis Unit and the Lessons Learned Unit, which had recently been submitted to the Fifth Committee, was noted. It was also noted that the experiences of the United Nations Protection Force and the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia had been omitted from the process of preparing the lessons learned report on the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium.

5. Satisfaction was expressed at the increased collaboration between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Public Information regarding the public information component of peacekeeping activities, and the importance of enhancing public awareness of the activities of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in the field was emphasized.

6. The view was expressed that, in the disposal of assets, further effort was required by the Department for the finalization of the assets inventory.

7. Concern was expressed about lack of resources, which had prevented the full implementation of a number of recommendations. Concern was also expressed about the fact that there was no information in the report on follow-up to the recommendations that had not been endorsed by the Committee but had been referred to other intergovernmental bodies, or on actions taken, as reflected in paragraph 2 of the report.

Conclusions and recommendations

8. The Committee noted that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations had substantially improved its management of the termination phase.

9. The Committee endorsed the conclusions of the triennial review.

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Addendum

Rapporteur: Mr. Juichi **Takahara** (Japan)

Coordination questions: Report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (item 5 (a))

Annual overview report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination for 1998

1. At its 10th and 11th meetings, on 11 June 1999, the Committee considered the annual overview report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) for 1998 (E/1999/48). The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the report and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the report.

Discussion

2. It was noted that ACC is a critical body for the functioning of the United Nations system and that it had made progress in enhancing coordination within the system during the period under review. The efforts of the Secretary-General to reform ACC and its subsidiary machinery were appreciated. Concern, however, was expressed about proliferation of task forces, working groups, etc. It was explained that these are task and time bound, ending when the defined objective is achieved. It was suggested that Member States should be briefed after each ACC session. It was noted this was being done for the Economic and Social Council and it was indicated this could also be done for the Committee for Programme and Coordination. Reference was made to the opportunity for dialogue which was previously provided by the joint meetings of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Administrative Committee on Coordination which were discontinued in accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/227 of 24 May 1996.

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3. A question was raised as to the impact of the appeals and statements issued by ACC. It was noted that these are usually of a nature that do not make measuring results easy or feasible. Insofar as members of ACC were concerned, they remain committed to implementing the decisions of ACC. It was up to the international community to respond to them as well. Efforts were, nevertheless, made to widely disseminate these statements, including bringing them to the attention of relevant intergovernmental bodies.

4. It was stated that ACC should make full use of information and communications technology. Information was provided on steps being taken so as to facilitate effective and timely communication among executive heads and among ACC subsidiary machinery. These include establishing an "extra-net", which will allow the United Nations system staff to communicate electronically, establishing an "Executive Information Network", a dedicated electronic communication for use by the executive heads, improving the ACC Web site, establishing a United Nations system-wide electronic telephone directory, which will also include information on individual's assignment and areas of expertise, and establishing a "United Nations Consortium" to enable sharing of the information resources of the various United Nations libraries. Greater use is also to be made of teleconferencing.

5. It was noted that communication and dialogue between ACC and the Economic and Social Council have improved, but that there is still scope for further enhancement in order to achieve a dynamic interaction between the two bodies. It was stated that the Committee for Programme and Coordination wishes to be informed in greater detail as to how legislative mandates coming from the Council are implemented by the system, and also which of these mandates are found to be impossible to implement and why.

6. A question was raised as to the relationship between the United Nations executive committees and the ACC and its subsidiary machinery. The executive committees are internal to the United Nations itself and incorporate only the departments, funds and programmes of the Organization. They complement the efforts of the Senior Management Group, chaired by the Secretary-General, to ensure coherence and synergies within the United Nations. ACC on the other hand brings together the specialized agencies, the Bretton Woods institutions, as well as the United Nations funds and programmes in order to promote greater cooperation and harmony system-wide.

7. Support was expressed for the priority attention given by ACC to Africa and for ACC's agreement that there should be no lessening of support for African development. Support was also expressed for the Secretary-General's report entitled "The Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa". It was also stressed that ACC should closely follow the ongoing initiatives to address the problems of Africa, such as the United Nations Special Initiative for Africa and the Tokyo International Conference on African Development.

8. Support was also expressed for the conclusions of ACC concerning poverty eradication. In a statement it released on this topic, ACC stressed that poverty eradication — a main underlying theme of recent global conferences — is a key international commitment and a central objective of the United Nations system. ACC's statement on poverty, along with a matrix to guide and facilitate field level coordination, was provided to the resident coordinators for use in the work of the country teams. In addition, the resident coordinators were requested to cite in their annual reports the accomplishments of the United Nations system in helping Governments and other organizations, including civil society, address poverty eradication.

9. The view was expressed that it is important for ACC to deal with the issue of globalization and that ACC should continue to monitor the impact of the financial crisis

and other negative consequences of globalization. The follow-up to the ACC statement on globalization included providing guidelines for resident coordinators and a matrix of activities that could be carried out by the system at the field level. Information was also provided on the follow-up to ACC's designation of the United Nations Environment Programme as the coordinating body for the system's response to the forest fires in Indonesia.

10. The importance of follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits was discussed. It was indicated that ACC should continue to give priority to follow-up to the outcome of these conferences. It was further indicated that there must be adequate resources for financing follow-up actions.

11. Questions were raised about links between ACC and the World Bank and as to whether the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the World Bank's Comprehensive Development Framework are duplicative. It was noted that UNDAFs were originally designed for United Nations funds and programmes, but now involve the full participation of the agencies of the United Nations system as well as the World Bank (General Assembly resolution 53/192, paras. 17–22). UNDAFs provide a programming framework for United Nations system development assistance to countries based on national priorities expressed in national development plans and on country strategy notes. The formulation of an UNDAF is commonly preceded by a Common Country Assessment (CCA). UNDAFs and CCAs are prepared by United Nations country teams, led by resident coordinators, with full participation of the concerned Governments and full ownership of the recipient Governments of the finalized frameworks.

12. It was explained that the Comprehensive Development Frameworks proposed by the World Bank are still in an early stage of development and are intended to be broader in scope than UNDAFs. The Comprehensive Development Framework, as a programming instrument, would encompass all assistance needs of countries, from all potential sources, including bilateral donors. The Comprehensive Development Framework preparation is to be led by the concerned programme country and United Nations system participation in their preparation is expected. Discussions at the senior level are being held between the United Nations system and the World Bank concerning the form of the United Nations system's participation in the Comprehensive Development Framework preparatory process. As to links between ACC and the World Bank, it was noted that the Bank is an active member of ACC, including in the work of its subsidiary machinery.

13. Support was expressed for ACC's having greater contact with civil society and the private sector, but doing so in a manner prescribed by the Charter of the United Nations.

14. It was noted that the strategic framework process is timely and deserves support. In this regard, a view was expressed concerning the need for expeditious development on the part of the United Nations system of approaches and programmes for reconstruction and rehabilitation of the infrastructure of Yugoslavia, which has been destroyed by military attacks. An observation was made concerning the significant economic losses of third States caused by the disruption of commercial navigation on the Danube river as a result of the destruction of the bridges.

15. In considering the report's treatment of Article 50 of the Charter, concerning the impact of sanctions on third-party States, a strong message was conveyed that it is time to move from words to action and to provide the necessary assistance to the affected countries. The important role of the Committee for Programme and Coordination in mobilizing and monitoring the economic assistance efforts by the international community at large, and by the United Nations system in particular, to States confronted with special economic

problems referred to in Article 50 of the Charter, was emphasized. The question was also raised as to whether the report should cover this topic, as it is not dealt with by ACC itself. It was indicated that the report dealt with this subject at the request of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, which could decide on any future arrangement in that regard.

16. With respect to administrative questions, the importance of ensuring safety and security of United Nations staff was stressed and support given for ACC's attention to this issue. It was noted that a number of Member States have contributed to a fund for financing activities related to staff security. Regarding the review of the International Civil Service Commission, it was stated that the General Assembly has not yet acted on the ACC proposal and that, until such time, existing procedures should be followed.

17. ACC's work programme for 1999 was given consideration and received expressions of support.

Conclusions and recommendations

18. The Committee took note of the annual overview report of ACC and noted that the current report was an improvement over those of previous years and that it was more comprehensive, analytical and focused on specific issues. Nevertheless, the Committee recommended that the report be further improved, include more information concerning levels of aid flows and provide detail on follow-up actions taken on past ACC decisions.

19. The Committee indicated its desire that it be informed in greater detail as to how legislative mandates coming from the Economic and Social Council are implemented by the system and also which of these mandates have been found not possible to implement and why.

20. The Committee expressed its support for the priority attention given to Africa by ACC and for ACC's agreement that there should be no lessening of support for African development.

21. Support was also expressed for the conclusions of ACC concerning poverty eradication. The Committee also indicated that it is important for ACC to continue to deal with the issue of globalization and to continue to monitor the impact of the financial crisis and the other negative consequences of globalization.

22. The Committee recommended that ACC continue to give priority to follow-up on the outcomes of United Nations conferences and summits and it indicated that there must be adequate resources to finance follow-up actions.

23. The Committee took note of the overview report's treatment of Article 50 of the Charter concerning the impact of sanctions on third-party States and conveyed a strong message that it is time to move from words to action and to provide the necessary assistance to the affected countries. At the same time, the Committee noted that it needs to be kept informed on any activities and progress in the field.

24. Regarding administrative questions, the Committee expressed its strong support for the attention being given by ACC to ensuring safety and security of United Nations staff and encouraged universal ratification of the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel and the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations.

25. The Committee recommended that it should be regularly briefed on the outcomes of ACC meetings.

26. The Committee requested that the next report of ACC include a part related to the implementation of the observations and recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in its report A/52/7 (chapter II, part IV, para. IV.4).

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Rapporteur: Mr. Juichi **Takahara** (Japan)

Coordination questions: implementation of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (item 5 (b))

1. At its 8th and 9th meetings, on 10 June 1999, the Committee considered the progress report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (E/AC.51/1999/6).

Discussion

2. The overall reaction to the report, in terms of its content and analysis, was encouraging. The view was expressed that it addressed the critical priority areas of African development, including the two areas of regional cooperation and integration and economic diversification which were not covered in the previous year's report. It also dealt with the specific recommendations made by the Committee with regard to the need for better coordination. However, it was felt that the quality of the report could have been enhanced by including the lessons learned and the constraints faced in each of the priority areas.

3. The need was stressed for African countries to identify their development priorities and to be fully involved in the process of global partnership. In that regard, national ownership of the Special Initiative should be promoted. It was also stated that African countries must define their own priorities and programmes and that African efforts at addressing their problems should be highlighted and supported by the international

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community. While the experiences of other developing countries were instructive, sharing and disseminating those experiences among African countries should be encouraged.

4. A view was expressed that the Special Initiative had the role of catalyst, generating new projects, many of which were under execution.

5. Concern was expressed that the number of countries targeted under the programme of the Special Initiative was limited. Emphasis was placed upon the need to increase the number of countries and the priority areas to be covered.

6. The view was also expressed that, at the outset, the Secretary-General's report should have shown the linkage between the Special Initiative and the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, given the fact that the Special Initiative was an implementing arm of the New Agenda. Furthermore, the view was expressed that the report should have shown the link between the priority areas of the New Agenda and the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report to the Security Council on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa,[1] and in that regard it was stressed that issues of conflict resolution, good governance and development needed to be accorded great priority. The view was also expressed that future reports should explicitly highlight the congruence of the objectives of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa with those of the Cairo Agenda for Action for relaunching Africa's economic and social development as well as the operational link between the Special Initiative and the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. It was also noted that the functional linkage between the Special Initiative and organizations of the United Nations system should be examined so as to provide more convincing evidence of the value added of the Initiative.

7. As regards the priority area of health, it was felt that the focus on HIV/AIDS masked the adverse impact on the health of the African populations of other diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis, which were claiming many more lives than the pandemic. The view was also expressed that African efforts at the local and national levels to address the problems of health needed to be highlighted.

8. Concern was expressed over the limited progress achieved in the area of poverty eradication in Africa. Since poverty eradication, an important objective of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, was critical for achieving development, it should have been the priority of the United Nations programmes in Africa, and poverty reduction the main performance indicator of progress achieved in the Special Initiative. Similarly, no tangible results had been achieved in food security. Enhanced implementation of those two areas was therefore required. It was also pointed out that much more needed to be done in the area of economic diversification.

9. Concern was also expressed regarding the lack of concrete actions in the priority areas under the Special Initiative, as the emphasis seemed to be on meetings, workshops and similar forums. Thus, more concrete actions were called for and in that regard it was felt that some of the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report on Africa could be used as a basis for defining those concrete activities.

10. The need was voiced for increased access to trade opportunities if Africa was not to be marginalized in the global economy. The view was expressed that, while African economies needed to be made competitive vis-à-vis other countries, increased access to the markets of developed countries and trade opportunities was equally important.

11. The importance of resource availability in implementing the priority areas of the Initiative was underscored. Concern was expressed that little progress had been made under the Initiative with regard to resource mobilization. That issue should receive further attention

from the international community. It was noted with concern that the heavy debt burden of African countries was siphoning resources away from critical development activities. In that respect, it was proposed that the conditions for the countries to qualify for relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative should be relaxed to enable more countries to benefit from the Initiative. With respect to critical issues pertaining to African development, such as debt and trade, reference should be made to recent regional African and global conferences as well as the Ministerial Statement issued by the recently concluded Joint Conference of African Ministers of Finance and Ministers of Economic Development, as well as the Ministerial Communiqué of the High-level Segment of the Economic and Social Council on market access: developments since the Uruguay Round[2] and General Assembly resolution 53/174 of 15 December 1998 on commodities.

12. It was noted with satisfaction that the coordination between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions had improved but it was also stressed that more needed to be done to increase the involvement of those institutions in the overall coordination of development assistance to Africa. Such comprehensive involvement required close consultation in the Administrative Committee on Coordination and the active participation of the leadership of the Bretton Woods institutions. The need to strengthen coordination and collaboration among bilateral, multilateral and regional and subregional initiatives was emphasized.

13. Concern was expressed about potential duplication owing to the existence of two secretariats within the United Nations system — the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries and the secretariat of the Special Initiative. The Committee noted with appreciation the close collaboration between the Office of the Special Coordinator and the secretariat of the System-wide Special Initiative.

14. Nevertheless, it was noted with concern that some proposals on performance indicators contained in annex IV to the Secretary-General's report related to governance-included elements that had not been approved by the relevant intergovernmental bodies and that they did not address the African reality. The Committee also noted that the proposals on performance indicators related to economic diversification, regional cooperation, resource mobilization and poverty eradication did not include elements that could measure the concrete actions to be taken to improve the situation in Africa in the economic areas.

15. On performance indicators for monitoring progress in the implementation of the Special Initiative, it was felt that the matter should be addressed carefully and cautiously as it was a relatively new area and was still being considered in other forums. The view was expressed that the performance indicators should be further refined to match the configuration of all African countries, taking into consideration the need for flexibility and adaptation to the reality and specificity of each country.

16. The Committee noted that the proposals related to performance indicators requested by the Committee on the issue had not been approved by the General Assembly.

17. The view was expressed that partnership with Africa through South-South cooperation should be enhanced and that the United Nations should play an increased and supportive role in that respect. In particular, the importance of support to the South Centre was stressed.

18. With a view to the goal of making the Special Initiative fully operational before its mid-term review as well as the final review of the United Nations Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, especially at the national level, the importance of monitoring the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee was stressed. In that regard, the Committee welcomed the matrix contained in annex III to the report, which could be improved by adding a fourth column on action taken by the agencies.

Conclusions and recommendations

19. The Committee took note of the progress report of the Secretary-General and of the results achieved in the Special Initiative and commended the improvement in quality over the previous year's report. The Committee noted with concern the limited number of countries covered by the Initiative and called for greater coverage of countries. It noted and endorsed the elaboration of the two programmes on diversification and regional cooperation and integration by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

20. The Committee noted the progress achieved in coordination at the country, subregional and regional levels and welcomed the establishment of the annual regional coordination meeting of organizations of the United Nations system working in the continent and the utilization of the Special Initiative as a coordinating mechanism. The Committee further noted with appreciation the active involvement of the Bretton Woods institutions in the implementation of the Special Initiative and the resulting enhanced coordination between the organizations of the United Nations and those institutions. The Committee took note of the innovative resource mobilization strategy outlined at the meeting jointly organized in October 1998 by the World Bank and the secretariat of the Special Initiative and formulated in a report to the Co-Chairs of the Administrative Committee on Coordination Steering Committee on the Special Initiative.

21. The Committee requested that a resource mobilization strategy together with the concrete action plan be submitted to the Committee for consideration at its fortieth session in 2000.

22. While welcoming the emphasis on improving Africa's trade competitiveness in the priority area of trade access and opportunities, the Committee requested that activities be also implemented on opportunities to access markets and that such activities be reflected in the next progress report.

23. The Committee noted the matrix prepared by the Secretariat in follow-up to and implementation of its recommendations and requested that such a matrix be improved by adding a fourth column indicating actions taken and submitted to it together with future progress reports.

24. The Committee took note with appreciation of the closer collaboration between the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries, the Economic Commission for Africa and the secretariat of the Special Initiative and requested those entities to work closely on the harmonization of the various initiatives on Africa, especially on enhancing the linkages and common elements among the Special Initiative, the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, the Cairo Agenda for Action for relaunching Africa's economic and social development, the Tokyo Agenda for Action, on the one hand, and the other multilateral and bilateral initiatives on the other.

25. The Committee called upon the lead agencies of the various clusters of the Special Initiative to be represented at the highest appropriate level at its future meetings on the Special Initiative, in order to assist the Committee in its deliberations.

26. The Committee recommended the acceleration of the Special Initiative by the extending of support to as many countries or regions as possible that may require funding in those activities that have a direct impact at the field level.

27. The Committee requested that its comments be reported to the Economic and Social Council's coordination segment on Africa to be held at Geneva in July 1999.

28. The Committee requested that a progress report on the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, including measures taken in response to the foregoing recommendations of the Committee, be submitted to it for consideration at its fortieth session in 2000.

Notes

[1] A/52/871.

[2] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/53/3), chap. IV.

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Reports of the Joint Inspection Unit (item 6)

More coherence for enhanced oversight in the United Nations system

1. At its 3rd and 4th meetings, on 9 June 1999, the Committee considered the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "More coherence for enhanced oversight in the United Nations system" (A/53/171), the comments of the Administrative Committee on Coordination thereon (A/53/171/Add.1) and the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/53/670). The report of the Joint Inspection Unit was introduced by John D. Fox, Inspector.

Discussion

2. Concern was expressed about the consideration by the Committee for Programme and Coordination of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit. The report had already been formally introduced in the Fifth Committee. Such duplication should have been avoided.

3. Appreciation was expressed for the report as a very readable, informative and timely document that was based on good analysis and contained useful reference information in its table and annex. In addressing an issue of great current interest, the document also was considered to be thought-provoking, as shown by the extensive debate in the Committee on it.

4. The view was also expressed that the report was very descriptive and added nothing substantial to the debate on the question. Moreover, the report was not action-oriented and had no practical impact.

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5. It was also stated that an evaluation of the functioning of the oversight mechanisms could have been more useful to identify the specific problems and recommend concrete solutions to the current problems of oversight in the United Nations system, in particular how to avoid any politicization of oversight at the United Nations.

6. Concerning the conclusions of the report in its executive summary, the view was expressed that there was no over-reliance on oversight mechanisms and that it was the duty of those mechanisms to identify the shortcomings in the performance of the United Nations system organizations. The view was also expressed that there was no blurring of the classical roles of internal and external oversight. The distinction was still clear according to the statutes, functions, scope of mandate and reporting procedures of each of them.

7. Regret was expressed that the report referred to a symposium on oversight held in October 1997, which was attended by some Member States of a specific group that does not represent the universal composition of the United Nations membership and therefore could not be used to represent accurately the views of Member States of the United Nations. A question was raised as to why the report did not refer to the debate held on the matter by some legislative bodies such as the Fifth Committee.

8. Support was expressed of the concept of shared responsibility for oversight, on which the report is based. However, it was noted that the necessary sharing of responsibility for oversight among the oversight mechanisms, secretariats and Member States in no way dilutes the responsibility of external oversight mechanisms for the full and effective performance of their functions. It was noted that the notion of shared responsibility requires that external oversight mechanisms first assume their primary responsibility by supporting independently and effectively the legislative organs in their oversight responsibilities. The view was also expressed that even though oversight cannot substitute for trust between Member States and the Secretariat, it is crucial that Member States be aware of cases of mismanagement.

9. The view was expressed that the report, while referencing the need to strengthen external oversight, put more stress on improving internal oversight. The view was expressed that emphasis on internal oversight reflected the current development of internal oversight mechanisms in the United Nations system. Interest was also expressed in a future Joint Inspection Unit report on the strengthening of external oversight.

10. Considerable discussion took place about whether or not Member States suffered from what was called "oversight indigestion" in the report. Use of the phrase in the report, in view of it having been drawn from a non-United Nations setting, was criticized. The view was expressed that Member States do suffer from being overwhelmed with oversight documents that arrive too late and are not coherently related to each other. The view also was expressed, that, if oversight indigestion existed at all, it was of a temporary nature and that it was better to be informed about problems in United Nations organizations by oversight documents rather than by newspapers. Contrary to the conclusion of the report, it was stated that there was no feeling of oversight indigestion. What was more needed was effective, action-oriented oversight instead of academic observations.

11. Regarding recommendation 1 on agreed plans for conducting internal oversight, the meaning of the word "plans" was clarified. As explained in the report of the Advisory Committee, rather than annual work plans, the word "plans" means proposals of the executive heads of each organization on the oversight structure to be established and the way to conduct and coordinate all its elements. Support was expressed for this recommendation, with the strong insistence, in accord with the report, that there was no expectation of the same model being applied to all organizations. It was stressed that the structures should be adapted to the specific needs and circumstances of each organization.

Nevertheless, the view was expressed that each organization should be free to choose their internal oversight mechanism according to their needs, and, in this regard, any proposal to coordinate and strengthen their internal oversight mechanism should be approved by their legislative organs. There was a question as to why executive heads should have to submit plans for this purpose to legislative bodies for their approval, since such information is included in normal programme budget submissions. It was explained that the different oversight mechanisms in most United Nations organizations are fragmented and the purpose was to consolidate such plans into one document so that Member States could more easily consider the matter as a whole and so that such consideration could be more focused specifically on internal oversight itself than would be possible in acting on an overall programme budget.

12. It was observed that the comments of the Administrative Committee on Coordination about micromanagement by Member States (A/53/171, para. 2) had raised serious concern, and a clarification was sought. The point was made that Member States had a legitimate right and obligation regarding the oversight function of the Organization. Article 10 of the Charter, read in conjunction with Article 7, did not put any restriction on Member States to discuss any question or any matter within the scope of the Charter.

13. Regarding recommendation 2 on reporting on internal oversight activities, it was observed that it is for each legislative body to determine the reporting procedure for both external and internal oversight mechanisms. The view was expressed that a more common systemwide format for reporting could increase the costs and complexity of existing reporting arrangements, as observed by the Administrative Committee on Coordination. The view was also expressed that the issue of recommendations made by internal oversight bodies was not a problem, since, by definition, those bodies make recommendations to executive heads and programme managers, not legislative organs. The view was also expressed that in the reporting procedures of internal oversight bodies, the legislative bodies of any organization should have a role in the consideration of their recommendations. Regarding the three separate elements of recommendation 2:

(a) **Recommendation 2 (a).** Support for this recommendation was expressed. Nevertheless, the view was expressed that it was up to the deliberative organs themselves to determine what action should be taken on the recommendations of the internal oversight body. The view was also expressed that internal oversight bodies should not, in any case, question the decisions taken by legislative organs, which are reviewed through established mechanisms. The need to avoid additional costs and complexity, which was of concern to the Administrative Committee on Coordination (A/53/171/Add.1, para. 3) was also addressed;

(b) **Recommendation 2 (b).** The view was expressed that, consistent with the point in the report of the Advisory Committee noted above, it was for legislative bodies to decide whether internal oversight reports should be submitted as documents of the executive heads or as documents that would not be subject to change by the executive heads. The view was also expressed that the internal oversight bodies were within the authority of executive heads and that they should not be considered as equal or parallel authorities. The view was also expressed that, while internal oversight reports should be made available to legislative organs as prepared by the internal oversight mechanisms, executive heads should take responsibility in the follow-up to their recommendations;

(c) **Recommendation 2 (c).** The need for this subparagraph was questioned, but the view was expressed that such a procedure would facilitate the reporting process. It was noted that the priority of legislative bodies must be respected and the decision of an executive head regarding his/her need for legislative authorization to implement an internal

oversight recommendation would be subject to approval by the appropriate legislative body. It was observed that the reports of internal oversight bodies should be submitted to the relevant legislative bodies for consideration and action and for any decision they may deem appropriate.

14. Regarding recommendation 3 on highlighting good practices, there was general support for the recommendation, with the observation that good practices for some organizations would not always be good practices for others. The view was also expressed that the recommendation was relevant.

15. Regarding recommendation 4 on Joint Inspection Unit analyses of consolidated annual summary reports on internal oversight activities, there was support for the concerns expressed in the comments of the Administrative Committee on Coordination and the report of the Advisory Committee about such analyses being just an added layer of reporting with questionable value. The question was also raised whether the Joint Inspection Unit could cope with this task in view of its lack of systematic reporting on reports of the Office of Internal Oversight Services. Nevertheless, the view was expressed that such analyses by the Joint Inspection Unit could provide helpful assistance to Member States in their making use of the annual internal oversight reports from all of the different organizations. It was pointed out that, rather than exhaustive and voluminous summaries of the internal oversight reports, the analyses would be the size of normal Joint Inspection Unit reports calling attention to systemwide problems and/or good practices that the Unit believes could be of interest to Member States. It also was noted that the recommendation called for issuing the analyses periodically rather than annually.

16. Regarding recommendation 5 on fostering a stronger professional oversight community, there was support for the recommendation, with the understanding that training was also to be included.

17. Regarding recommendation 6 on more dialogue among oversight partners, there was support for more dialogue, but concern was expressed about the nature of the dialogue and the need to assure its transparency. The view was also expressed that such arrangements were already in place in the United Nations system.

18. The view was expressed that there should have been a seventh recommendation regarding the need to assure monitoring and follow-up on oversight recommendations. It was pointed out that recommendation 2 called for annual reports on internal oversight activities that would include reference to the status of action taken on recommendations, but that this was an issue that could deserve a recommendation of its own. Related to this matter, the view was stated that one of the major problems for the Joint Inspection Unit was the absence of follow-up on its reports. It was noted that the Unit had included in its annual report two years ago[1] an annex entitled "Towards a more effective system of follow-up on reports of the Joint Inspection Unit" and that approval of that proposal was still awaited.

19. The view was also expressed that in the follow-up system of internal oversight bodies, those recommendations which could imply changes in legislative mandates should not be implemented without the prior approval of the pertinent legislative bodies.

20. In the context of the preliminary discussion on the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit, it was noted that at the current session the Committee was presented with only one report for its consideration owing to the lack of comments by the Administrative Committee on Coordination on other Joint Inspection Unit reports.

Conclusions and recommendations

21. The Committee noted the observations of the Administrative Committee on Coordination on micromanagement (A/53/171/Add.1, paras. 2 and 7) and emphasized the role of Member States under the Charter.

22. The Committee concluded that oversight should not be considered a panacea for making things right in the United Nations system.

23. On the recommendations contained in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit, the Committee reached the following conclusions:

(a) Recommendation 3. The Committee recommended approval of this recommendation, on the understanding that all good practices cannot be replicated throughout the United Nations system and that the respective legislative bodies should take decisions, as necessary, in this regard;

(b) Recommendation 5. The Committee recommended approval of this recommendation subject to the comments by the Administrative Committee on Coordination in paragraph 6 of its report (A/53/171/Add.1) regarding confidentiality of certain data and cost-effectiveness of some of the initiatives;

(c) Recommendation 6. The Committee recommended approval of this recommendation, on the understanding that the dialogue should be through relevant established forums.

24. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to expedite obtaining the comments by the Administrative Committee on Coordination for due consideration of the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit by the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 34* (A/52/34).

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Addendum

Rapporteur: Mr. Juichi **Takahara** (Japan)

Improving the working methods and procedures of the Committee for Programme and Coordination within the framework of its mandate

1. The Committee considered agenda item 7, entitled "Improving the working methods and procedures of the Committee for Programme and Coordination within the framework of its mandate", and reviewed the implementation of the conclusions and recommendations agreed to by the Committee on the matter at its thirty-eighth session.

Documentation

2. It was noted that in order for the Committee to fulfil its mandate in a satisfactory manner, it required complete and timely submission of relevant documentation.

Time limit

3. The view was expressed that a time limit for delivery of statements should be established in a large debate on subjects such as the medium-term plan and the programme budget. In the same vein, it was pointed out that the lack or inaccuracy of responses to queries raised by delegations led to unnecessary and lengthy discussions and follow-up comments.

Conclusions and recommendations

4. The Committee affirmed the shared responsibility of the members, observers and the Secretariat in improving the working methods and procedures of the Committee for Programme and Coordination within the framework of its mandate.

5. The Committee reaffirmed that reports of the Secretary-General should conform to the mandates approved by relevant intergovernmental bodies, the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, the terms of reference of the Committee and relevant General Assembly resolutions.

6. The Committee stressed that the Secretariat should submit the necessary documentation on time and in accordance with the six-week rule. Their format should be in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 52/214 B of 22 December 1997 and 53/208 B of 18 December 1998. In that connection, the Committee

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emphasized that the Secretariat must pay closer attention to the contents of the documents as well as to the quality of translation.

7. The Committee agreed that draft reports of the Committee prepared by the Secretariat must accurately reflect the opinions expressed during the discussion on specific matters. The tendency of delegations making proposals simply to balance views that they do not like should be discouraged. All draft reports should be provided to the Rapporteur and Coordinators before circulation so as to ensure that the reports accurately reflect the views expressed during the discussion.

8. The Committee agreed to concentrate on the conclusions and recommendations section of the draft report.

9. The Committee recognized that the discussion section does not represent a consensus view, and therefore negotiations on the discussion section should be avoided. In this regard, the Committee emphasized that no actions should be taken by the Secretariat on matters reflected in the discussion section, nor should action be taken on recommendations not approved by the Economic and Social Council and/or the General Assembly.

10. The Committee noted the use of the passive voice in the discussion section and recommended that, if possible, the repetitive usage of the phrase "the views were expressed" should be avoided.

11. The Committee reiterated that in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council, observers may participate in its deliberations on any matter of particular concern to them. The Committee reaffirmed the responsibility and privileges of its members in the decision-making process and the recommendations they adopt.

12. The Committee recognized the need to pay more in-depth attention to its coordinating role as the main subsidiary organ of the Economic and Social Council.

13. The Committee emphasized the need to maintain, to the extent possible, normal working hours.

14. The Committee, once again, emphasized that its role, in all aspects of its mandate, including its secretariat, should be strengthened in order to allow it to implement effectively the tasks assigned to it.

15. The Committee agreed to continue to implement its recommendations contained in paragraphs 362 to 369 of its report[1] and decided to continue consideration of this agenda item at its fortieth session.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 16* (A/53/16)